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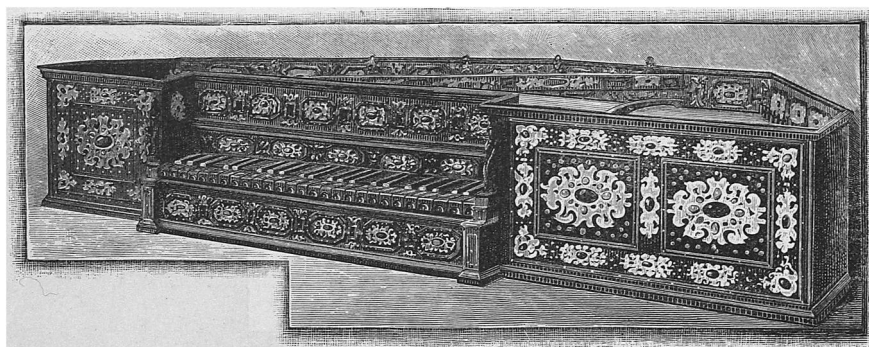


FIG. 1. SPINET, BY ANNIBALE DEI ROSSI, SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AS WORKS OF ART.

MUSICAL instruments have been objects for adornment in all ages of art, from archaic times to its most florid developments in the Renaissance period. They are, therefore, one of the best illustrations of the culture of every age and country. Upon them the barbarous tribes of the old world and the new have lavished all the art of which they are capable, and the civilized nations of Europe have bestowed every care on their ornamentation. It would seem, indeed, that musical instruments are fitted to delight the eye of man equally with the ear, and the carver, the inlayer, and the painter have here combined in the exercise of their skill, producing works that are now priceless treasures in the cabinets of art-collectors.

The instruments still in use amongst barbarian nations are ruder in form and construction than any that are represented in antique art. They consist of conch-shells; of whistles fashioned of clay; of bone flutes; of drums headed with shark-skin; and sometimes of a simple kind of lyre. Those of the pipe kind are often designed in the form of animals, and carved in wood and bone; while the instruments of percussion are painted with rude and fantastic devices. Of the animal type are some of the instruments of the Chinese: such, for instance, as the *ou*, which is shaped like a tiger; and the *san-heen*, a kind of guitar, which, though elegant in shape, is covered with the scaly skin of the boa. Zoological in design, too, is the *meegyoung*, or alligator-harp of Burmah, an instrument in the form of a crocodile, which has glass eyes, and is flamboyant in red and gold.

The musical instruments of the ancient Egyptians, the oldest with which we are acquainted, were much more elegant; they were constructed with an evident appreciation of their adaptability to artistic purposes. We are told by Diodorus Siculus that the Egyptians had little knowledge of harmony; but the character and beauty of the instruments depicted on their monuments disprove this statement. They use the single and double pipe, the *nafre*, a species of guitar, and the sacred *sistrum*, the scourge of Typhon—a metal frame fitted with bars to rattle in time with the music. Their chief instrument, however, was the harp, which, as the monuments show, was beautifully shaped, and finished with great elaboration of detail. It was of several kinds; and the player knelt on the ground to the smaller ones, but to the larger ones, as represented in the tomb of Ramses III., he stood up. This monument, I may add, was long known as the "Harper's Tomb," from the fine figures of the royal harpers with which it was painted.

With the Greeks music was a gift from heaven. It was with music that Orpheus charmed the tremendous presences; it was with music that Amphion conjured up the walls of Thebes; it was to Apollo's voice and lute that "Ilion like a mist rose into towers." Every circumstance of Hellenic life, from the cradle to the grave, was accompanied by its sounds; and alike to the merry seasons of seed-time and harvest, to the bacchanals of the time of vintage, and to the solemn ceremonies that attended the obsequies of the departed, did it render a fitting and sympathetic accompaniment. The gods themselves were the authors of musical instruments—Apollo, son of Latona, and Hermes, son of Maia, goat-footed Pan, and Athena, the beneficent and the wise; they bore them on Olympus, and they bore them in that marble life they got from the sculptor. It is from this latter source that we learn the nature of those used by the Greeks. The chief of these were the double pipe; the lyre, with its varieties, the kithara, the phormix, and the chelys; and the psaltery, which was a kind of a harp. In form, as might be expected, they strongly resembled those of the Egyptians, from whom they were derived; and like these they were decorated with the characteristic ornaments of the national art. The lyre

especially was designed with much graceful scroll-work; but the monuments do not enable us to be precise as to details. There is even less to be said of the instruments in use in Rome. Roman art was inspired from Hellenic culture; the Roman flutes and cymbals were adaptations from the Greek likewise, and do not claim more particular notice here. On the decline of the Roman Empire, and the advent of the hordes of northern barbarians in Southern Europe, musical instruments lost their æsthetic value, and it was long before they reached the standard from which they had fallen. Meanwhile, however, the Persians and Arabians were producing works that may well be compared with any that had preceded them. Their instruments of music are of



FIG. 5. HARP, FRANCE, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

especial interest, since it is from them that many in modern use have been directly derived. The chief instrument of the Arabians was the lute, *al'ud*, which they got from Persia. Of all

musical instruments it is probably the most graceful in form; and becoming familiar to the western nations at the time of the Crusades, it continued long the favorite instrument of the troubadours. The Arabian, too, had instruments of the violin kind, such as the *kemange* and *rebab*, and many others very beautifully formed. As for the instruments of the Middle Ages, both in England and abroad, they were simple in character, so far as may be judged from the representations in manuscripts and painted glass, which are almost their only record. Chief amongst them may be mentioned the lute, the crowd, the harp, and the organistrum; but there were many others, of which Mr. Carl Engel has given much information in his monograph on "Musical Instruments," in the South Kensington Handbook Series. From the conventional representations of them to which I have alluded there is little to be gained beyond a knowledge of their general forms; but it is evident that they were embellished with the characteristic decoration of Gothic art.

But if the musical instruments of the Ancients and of the Middle Ages were beautiful in form and ornament, it remained for Italy and the Renaissance first to give them the value in art and in ornamentation for which they have been ever since so justly prized. The instruments made in the Italy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were probably the finest and most elaborate ever produced. They are valuable alike for beauty of material and excellence of workmanship. They are the handiwork of men whose names have sometimes come down to us, whose genius and experience surrounded them with pupils, thus founding schools of musical instrument makers in many of the towns of Italy. Rome, Bologna, and Venice were celebrated for the manufacture of the lute, with its varieties, the mandola, the mandoline, the chitarrone, and the theorbo. The lute consists of a pear-shaped body of cedar or pine, with a neck of moderate length, which in those of the theorbo type is double; and the elegance of its form made it a favorite with the workmen in the north of Italy, who were assisted in its production by the skill of German settlers. It was generally inlaid with marquetry work of tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and ivory, and its sound-board was adorned with pictures. Prominent amongst Bolognese lute makers was Lucas Maler, whose works have always been highly esteemed. The mandoline, most poetical of instruments, which has been attuned to many a lover's serenade, was a small kind of lute, generally in the richest and most delicate work. The one illustrated in Fig. 3 is Italian, of last century, and is very finely inlaid. The beauty of the violin is almost entirely a beauty of form, for it is necessarily devoid of ornamentation, which would only impair the quality of its tone. Its manufacture was carried to perfection by the great artists of the Italian schools.

It is impossible to depart from the canons of their achievement without deteriorating the quality of the instrument; and therefore the art of violin making is one of the utmost exactitude. The great Italian makers were the Amati, Stradivarius, and the Guarneri, all of the Cremonese school, whose works, besides the merit of their tone, are prized for the beauty of the lines on which they are built, and for the transparency of their varnish, which gives a lucid depth to the choice of wood of which they are made. A fine instrument, at South Kensington, attributed to Gaspar da Salo, another of the most renowned of the early Italian makers, is given in Fig. 4. But if the violin itself was



FIG. 2. QUILTERNA, BY JOACHIM TIEKE, SIXTEENTH CENTURY.
FIG. 3. MANDOLIN, ITALIAN, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
FIG. 4. VIOLIN, BY GASPAR DA SALO, SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

simple in form and pure of decoration, its terminal scroll was sometimes carved with a cherub's head or a grotesque animal. Ole Bull, the celebrated violinist, had a priceless Gaspar da Salo which was thus decorated, with a carving said to be the work of Benvenuto Cellini. There are several varieties of the violin, such as the *viola d'amour*, the *viola di Bardone*, and the *viola da gamba*, in all of which the general form is retained. Of the last kind there is a good Italian specimen at South Kensington, in which the neck is inlaid with a marquetry of ivory, and terminates in foliated scroll-work and in a woman's bust. But Italian artists employed their greatest skill on instruments of the harpsichord class, of which there were several varieties, the predecessors of the modern pianoforte. The chief of these were the *clavicembalo*, the *archicembalo*, and the *clavicordo*. There are some most beautiful specimens at South Kensington. Amongst them is a *clavicembalo* by Antonius Baffo, of Venice, 1574, which is painted with flowers, and with Apollo and the Muses, surrounded with arabesques. Another has a leather case, stamped and gilt, with a Renaissance ornament and armorial shield. There is also a most elaborate spinet, made at Murano, near Venice, which is said to have belonged to Elizabeth of Bohemia, daughter of James I. This beautiful instrument has a case of stamped and gilt leather, and is decorated within with panels of mythological subjects in colored glass, and with plaques of silver foliage and enamel on copper. The keyboard is also enamelled. But the gem of the collection is a spinet by Annibale dei Rossi, of Milan, dated 1577, for which the department gave \$1,300. This magnificent instrument is of wood, with ivory in strapwork patterns. It is inlaid with decorative stones, including jasper and agate, and set with pearls and garnets, and there are beautifully carved figures in colored ivory at each end of the keyboard. It is figured in our first picture. I may add that in Italy the manufacture of wind instruments never reached the same perfection as that of stringed instruments. Still, the flutes were enriched with much good carving. Of these, a celebrated maker in the early part of the eighteenth century was Anciuti, of Milan.

The inspiration of the French school of musical instrument makers was derived from Italy, along with the spirit of the Renaissance; and its productions have much in common with those already described. Their ornamentation consists in a profusion of scroll work, carving and inlaying, with tempera paintings of mythological subjects and landscape. Many of the instruments made in France are unquestionably the work of Italians, who were settled at Paris in the seventeenth century. The best lutes, as I have said, were made in Northern Italy; but many of the French specimens are of great beauty. Paul Belami was a celebrated lute maker at Paris in the beginning of the seventeenth century, as was also Dimanche Drouyn about the same time. Instruments of the violin type were never largely made in France, and those that were produced there never achieved the elegance and gracefulness of Italian work. It is not uncommon to find the bellies of early specimens carved with classical subjects in low relief or pictured with floral designs.

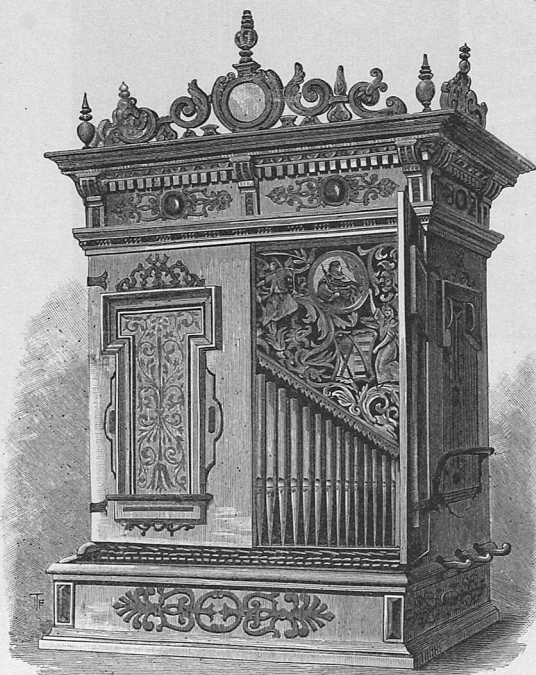


FIG. 5. CHAMBER ORGAN, GERMAN, SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

The *vielle*, or *hurdy-gurdy*, a violin-shaped instrument of rustic nature (still to be heard on London stones and along English highways), in which the vibration of the strings is caused by the revolution of a wheel, the modulation being produced by keys, was much used in France in the beginning of last century, chiefly by the shepherds and shepherdesses of the mock Arcadia, then so fashionable. One of the best makers was Varquin, of Paris, one instrument of whose make (now at South Kensington) is inlaid with mother-of pearl and plain and colored ivory, the diaped neck terminating in a carved female head. The French were good makers of harpsichords, which instrument they call the *clavecin*. Of these Pascal Taskin, of Paris, during the early part of the eighteenth century, was the most accomplished. His instruments are painted and lacquered with Chinese and Japanese subjects. The manufacture of the harp was greatly advanced in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it was much used. The pillars of the French harps were generally fluted, but sometimes they were enwreathed with flowers; and their capitals were elaborately carved. Often caryatides were used to support the neck, and the soundboard was painted with pastoral scenes or with trophies and flowers. At South Kensington there are two such harps, one presented by Mrs. E. Richards, and another said to have belonged to Marie Antoinette. The latter instrument, which is given in figure 5, is painted and gilt; and the pillar, wreathed with flowers and trophies of instruments, terminates in a grotesque mask, surmounted with a cupid, while two birds are carved at the foot.

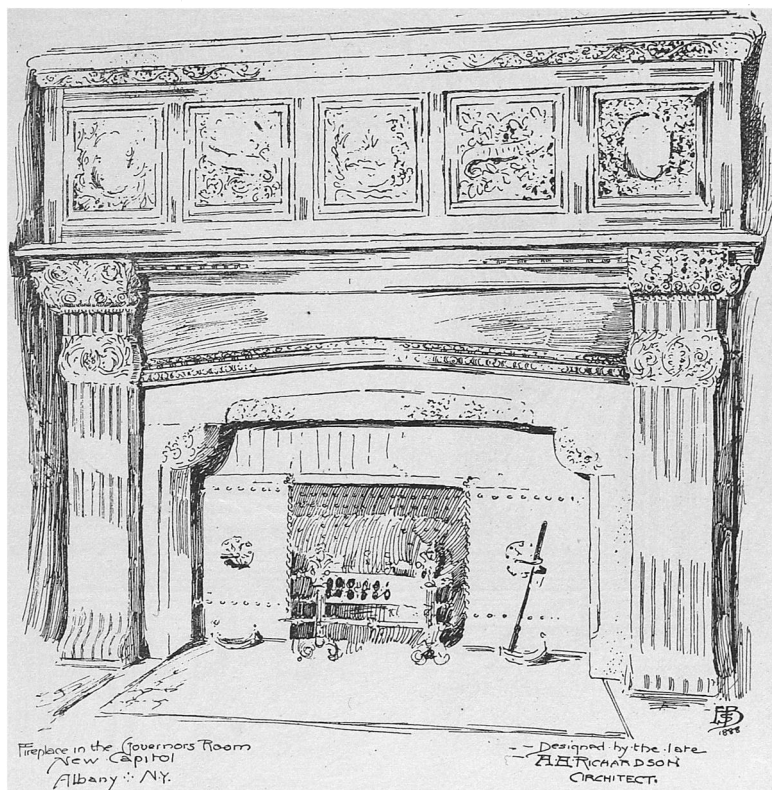
We have seen how German skill was utilized by the Bolognese lute makers. It is natural to find that the Italian influence is obvious in the musical instruments produced in Germany and the Netherlands. Yet here, even more than in France, elegance of form became of less account than gaudiness of surface, an attribute which was often developed to an extreme. One of the best makers of instruments of the lute and violin types was Joachim Tielke (1600), of Hamburg; his productions are well shaped and very characteristically decorated. There is a *quinterna* or *chiterna*, in South Kensington Museum, by him, illustrated in figure 2, which has a neck of tortoiseshell incrustated with subjects in ivory and set with precious stones. There is also a *viola di Bardone* of his, with an open fretwork finger-board terminating in three lions' heads, while above the bridge are carved figures of negroes. Other celebrated German lute makers were Ludwig Porzt, of Regensburg; Hans Gerle, of Nürnberg; and the three Tieffenbruckers, Magnus, Wendelin and

Leonhard. Antwerp was a great centre for the manufacture of harpsichords. There the Ruckers, who are said to have worked from 1570 to the middle of the following century, produced instruments which for beauty of material and excellence of workmanship almost equalled the masterworks of Italy. Germany, too, was renowned for its organs. One of these, a noble sixteenth century *organ positive*, or chamber organ, now at South Kensington, is figured in our sixth example. It is Renaissance in style, is painted and gilt; and is pictured, on the inside of the shutters, with tempera paintings of the "Dismissal of Hagar" and "Abraham's Sacrifice." Above the pipes is an open fretwork ornament, with the portrait and armorial bearings of John George, Duke of Saxony.

The influence of the Italian masters was felt somewhat later in England than in Germany and France. We know from manuscripts and reliefs that many varieties of instruments were here in use during the Middle Ages; but until the reign of Henry VIII. they were simple of form and slight in ornamentation. Then, however, flat carving began to be much employed in their decoration. Under the Tudors many instruments of Italian manufacture were imported into England, which became models for native workmen to follow; and their influence is marked in the school of English violin makers that rose about the year 1600. The Earl of Warwick is the possessor of a curious violin, 1578, which is most elaborately carved with woodland scenes, and in which the finger-board, terminating in a dragon's head, bears on a silver plate the arms of Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester: a circumstance that gives some color to the tradition that it was a gift from the queen to her courtier. But the seventeenth century violin makers followed the Italian model in its simplicity, and their chief, Pamphilon, did work that is not unworthy of the inspiration.

The manufacture of musical instruments was never so extensive in England as in Italy and France. Still, the age of Anne was fruitful of harpsichords of beautiful cabinet work, often gilt and inlaid with varied woods in the style of the date; and towards the close of the eighteenth century there were in London some excellent lute and violin makers who produced new varieties of these instruments, which were very artistically designed. Of these, harp-lyres, harp-lutes, and guitar-lyres were manufactured by Edward Light and R. Wornum, whose work was decorated with inlaying and gilding. The instruments in use did not differ materially from those I have described elsewhere.

JOHN LEYLAND.



Fireplace in the Governors Room
New Capitol
Albany, N.Y.

— Designed by the late
— RICHARDSON
ARCHITECT.